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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/577,170	12/13/2006	Young-Woo Kim	4220-127 US	1116
26817	7590	09/09/2008	EXAMINER	
MATHEWS, SHEPHERD, MCKAY, & BRUNEAU, P.A.			LEUBECKER, JOHN P	
29 THANET ROAD, SUITE 201				
PRINCETON, NJ 08540			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			3739	
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			09/09/2008	PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	10/577,170	KIM, YOUNG-WOO	
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	John P. Leubecker	3739	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 26 April 2006.
 2a) This action is **FINAL**. 2b) This action is non-final.
 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 1 and 2 is/are pending in the application.
 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
 5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
 6) Claim(s) 1 and 2 is/are rejected.
 7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
 8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
 10) The drawing(s) filed on 26 April 2008 is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 a) All b) Some * c) None of:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
 2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
 3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
 Paper No(s)/Mail Date 12/13/06.

4) Interview Summary (PTO-413)
 Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
 5) Notice of Informal Patent Application
 6) Other: _____.

Drawings

1. Figures 1-5 should be designated by a legend such as --Prior Art-- because only that which is old is illustrated. See MPEP § 608.02(g). Corrected drawings in compliance with 37 CFR 1.121(d) are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. The replacement sheet(s) should be labeled “Replacement Sheet” in the page header (as per 37 CFR 1.84(c)) so as not to obstruct any portion of the drawing figures. If the changes are not accepted by the examiner, the applicant will be notified and informed of any required corrective action in the next Office action. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance.

2. The drawings are objected to as failing to comply with 37 CFR 1.84(p)(4) because reference character “66” has been used to designate four different elements in Figure 5. Corrected drawing sheets in compliance with 37 CFR 1.121(d) are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. Any amended replacement drawing sheet should include all of the figures appearing on the immediate prior version of the sheet, even if only one figure is being amended. Each drawing sheet submitted after the filing date of an application must be labeled in the top margin as either “Replacement Sheet” or “New Sheet” pursuant to 37 CFR 1.121(d). If the changes are not accepted by the examiner, the applicant will be notified and informed of any required corrective action in the next Office action. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance.

3. The drawings are objected to as failing to comply with 37 CFR 1.84(p)(5) because they include the following reference character(s) not mentioned in the description: element(s) “66” as

shown in Figure 5. Corrected drawing sheets in compliance with 37 CFR 1.121(d), or amendment to the specification to add the reference character(s) in the description in compliance with 37 CFR 1.121(b) are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. Any amended replacement drawing sheet should include all of the figures appearing on the immediate prior version of the sheet, even if only one figure is being amended. Each drawing sheet submitted after the filing date of an application must be labeled in the top margin as either “Replacement Sheet” or “New Sheet” pursuant to 37 CFR 1.121(d). If the changes are not accepted by the examiner, the applicant will be notified and informed of any required corrective action in the next Office action. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance.

Specification

4. The specification is objected to as failing to provide proper antecedent basis for the claimed subject matter. See 37 CFR 1.75(d)(1) and MPEP § 608.01(o). Correction of the following is required: the specification fails to mention anything regarding “preset information” as recited in claim 2.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

5. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

6. Claims 1 and 2 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Wilk (U.S. Pat. 5,368,015).

Referring mainly to Figures 9, 10A and 10B, Wilk discloses a stereoscopic laparoscope apparatus comprising a laparoscope (Fig.10A, col.10, lines 48-49), a computer (44, Fig.1, col.5, lines 63-68) adapted to convert and store image information of the patient's affected part inputted via the laparoscope, and a monitor (46, Fig.1) used to output the image information converted by the computer, the laparoscope comprising: a supporting unit (344,330, Fig.10A) including a supporting rod (330) having a predetermined length and diameter; a flexible tube unit (332a,332b) including a pair of left (332a) and right (332b) flexible tubes, which are adapted to be spaced apart from each other within a predetermined angular range (note distance d1 in Figures 9 and 10B) installed at the tip end of the supporting unit (Fig.10B); and a binocular camera assembly (312,314, Fig.9) including a pair of left (312) and right (314) cameras installed at the tip end of the flexible tube unit (col. 11, lines 29-32) so that they take images of the affected part in the abdominal cavity. Wilk discloses that the flexible tubes can be spaced apart using an active actuator such as a tension cable assembly (col.11, lines 21-28), which would be analogous to that exemplified by the tip bend control (36) in Figure 1. In such case, computer/switching circuit (326, Fig.10A) would anticipate a manipulator on the proximal end of the support unit and controlling the active actuator (e.g., motor) according to electric signals. The electric signals that control the active actuator would be considered preset information.

Although support tube is comprised on two prongs (332a,332b) at the distal end, it would appear that the supporting rod (330) (proximally to the flexible tubes) is a single tube. Thus,

Wilk fails to disclose that the supporting unit includes a pair of parallel left and right supporting rods. However, use of two parallel tubes in place of a single tube does not constitute inventive effort and thus does not distinguish over the prior art of record. One of ordinary skill in the mechanical arts would recognize that, without criticality, a single tube or two parallel tubes, both used for the same purpose (as a support unit for the laparoscope) and both providing the same functions (supporting the flexible tubes and containing elements such as wires) would be obvious over one another as a matter of choice in design. In addition, one would be motivated to use two separate tubes for the support unit (330) of Wilk since such would provide a simpler alternative to forming a bifurcation at the distal end of a single tube, such bifurcation requiring special techniques over simple attaching two parallel tubes together. Since Applicant provides no criticality for specifying the use of two parallel tubes and one of ordinary skill would reason for the alternative use of a single tube and two parallel tubes as discussed above, it would have been obvious to have used two parallel "support rods" in place of the single tube (330) in Wilk.

Conclusion

7. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

US 6976956 B2	Takahashi; Susumu et al.
US 5494483 A	Adair; Edwin L.
US 6066090 A	Yoon; InBae
US 5305121 A	Moll; Frederic H.
US 5166787 A	Irion; Klaus

US 6450950 B2 Irion; Klaus

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to John P. Leubecker whose telephone number is (571) 272-4769. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Friday, 6:00 AM to 2:30 PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Linda C.M. Dvorak can be reached on (571) 272-4764. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/John P. Leubecker/
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 3739

jpl